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**INFORMATION REPORT**

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SUBJECT Belgian Communist Reversal of Policy

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THIS IS UNEVALUATED INFORMATION

1. The special session of the Central Committee of the Belgian Communist Party, 3 and 4 Oct 53, had important repercussions within the party, which have gone entirely unnoticed. The meeting was called to consider national defense and independence. Like everything else, this had to be adjusted to the latest orders from Moscow on EDC and German rearmentation.
2. The resulting struggle (against Belgian entry into EDC and the Belgian constitutional revision which it necessitates) presents a special problem for the Belgian Communist Party. No such problem exists for Communist Parties in other nations (or most other nations). Since there are two linguistic communities in Belgium, the Communists have always urged a federative state (of course on a republican and not a royal basis). This is supposed to follow the model of Soviet treatment of different ethnic groups and national communities.
3. Now, one thing that disturbs the Communists is that, under EDC, the various organized national states are to be treated in just about the same way, i.e., as a federation. Suddenly realizing this, Moscow has ordered the Belgian Communists to reverse themselves once more, like so many whirligigs; renounce federalist ideas; make an utter and immediate "self-criticism" to show why they are doing so.
4. And what did the Belgian Communist chiefs do about it? They obeyed, of course. Hitherto the idea of Belgian federalism has had no more ardent advocates than Jean Terfve, Glineur, Delage, and the rest of them. At the Tenth National Congress 31 Mar 51 and at the central committee's preparatory

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meeting, 24-25 Feb 51, the Belgian Communists went on record definitely as favoring federalism. Now they have to take a new stand and make new explanations.

5. The Communists' habit of reversing themselves like weathercocks is, to be sure, well known. This case is, however, so striking that it is worth setting down the Belgian leaders' series of self contradictions in two parallel columns. Here is what Edgar Lalmand wanted to impose in Feb and Mar 1951 in one column and what he wanted to impose (in the same sharp tone) in Oct 1953:

Feb-Mar 1951Oct 1953

1. Federalism permits Belgian existence as a state, without helping develop a Belgian nation.	1. There is a more than troublesome confusion between the Belgium whose independence we mean to defend, and the Belgian State, which has sold that independence down the river.
2. Federalism favors the free expansion of national groups in Belgium.	2. Such a formula endangers the unity of the working class and shackles the union of patriots and democrats of our country.
3. Federalism ends the inequalities which permit the Belgian bourgeoisie to maneuver to produce divisions to their own benefit.	3. Federalism favors the emergence of economic and social inequalities, which let the bourgeoisie develop extra efficiency in their maneuvers to create divisions.
4. Federalism ends the reactionary grasp on the country as a whole.	4. Federalism, far from ending the American grasp, would strengthen it.
6. Responsible Communist Party leaders have taken this reversal hard. Discussion after Lalmand's statement was vehement. Members of the Central Committee were willing to bow to Moscow's order. But how were they going to explain to the Walloons (the big majority in the Belgian Community Party). Naturally the "Drapeau Rouge," though giving an entire page to the general discussion, published not a word of this. But it is queer that nobody in the Belgian newspaper world played up such a new and radical about face of the Communist Party.	

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